

Allotments and the Environment

Allotments play a big part in the fight to preserve our environment. They need to be protected especially in urban areas. They provide a habitat for all kinds of wildlife from frogs, toads, newts and slow worms to field mice, hedgehogs and many different species of birds and insects. When allotments disappear, often wildlife disappears with them. Many good allotment sites have special areas which are untouched allowing wildlife to thrive.

Allotment sites promote the benefits of re-cycling kitchen and allotment waste through composting which is ideal to put back into the soil. They are also keen to encourage the saving of rainwater with water butts. An allotment is one place where the saying 'Re-use, Re-use, Recycle' comes into its own.

Allotment gardening offers additional benefits that help to ameliorate loneliness and enable people to contribute to society. Keeping an allotment is a healthy activity, spending as little as 15 minutes a day in the summer sunshine will build up levels of vitamin D. Additional benefits include provision of fresh, local, seasonal produce; a sense of achievement; contact with nature.

Section 23 (2) of the Small Holdings and Allotments Act 1908 states that a Council has a statutory duty to provide allotment plots where more than 6 residents make written representation. West Swindon Parish Council has currently 54 people waiting for a plot. We are actively looking at options to help people access an allotment.

Cllr Mike Burtenshaw.